

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-12 IO-13 /104 W
-----129544 121718Z /47

R 121430Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5863
INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LAGOS 0472

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, ET, US, NI
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH NEW ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR TO NIGERIA

1. NEWLY ARRIVED EITHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR KESATE BADEMA CALLED ON ME TODAY. WE DISCUSSED THE SOMALI-ETHIOPIAN PROBLEM IN SOSE DEPTH. I DREW HEAVILY ON POINTS ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE MADE TO AMBASSADOR AYALEW JUST BEFORE CHRISTMAS. MANY OF BADEMA'S RESPONSES WERE ALONG LINES SIMILAR TO AYALEW'S TO MOOSE (STATE 306223).

2. BADEMA DISCUSSED NIGERIAN MEDIATION EFFORT WITH OBASANJO WHEN HE PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS THREE WEEKS AGO. OBASANJO HAD ASKED HIS VIEWS ON A MEETING NIGERIA WOULD HOST BETWEEN SOMALIS AND ETHIOPIANS AT NON-MINISTERIAL LEVEL. BADEMA HAD ASKED WHAT THE MEETING WOULD DISCUSS. OBASANJO REPLIED "A CEASE-FIRE," TO WHICH BADEMA HAD RESPONDED THAT NO RPT
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NO SUCH MEETING COULD TAKE PLACE SO LONG AS THE OGADEN WAS OCCUPIED BY SOMALI TROOPS. ETHIOPIA HAD ABUNDANT PROOF OF THE ABSURDITY OF THE SOMALI ARGUMENT THAT THE LIBERATION FORCES WERE INDIGENOUS TO THE AREA. "NOT ONLY DO WE HAVE PHOTOGRAPHS OF SOMALI ARMY TANKS ON OUR TERRITORY," BADEMA CLAIMED, "BUT WE HAVE PROOF OF LARGE QUANTITIES OF SOLDIERS INFILTRATED INTO THE OGADEN BY SOMALIA OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS."

3. BADEMA SAID HE INTENDED TO PROPOSE TO GARBA (IF HE COULD EVER GET AN APPOINTMENT WITH HIM) THAT THE FMG PUT THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTION TO THE US - "POSSIBLY DURING THE NEXT CARTER-OBASANJO CONVERSATION." THE US WOULD UTILIZE ITS CURRENT "INDEPENDENT POSITION" TO OBTAIN PUBLIC COMMITMENTS AT HIGHEST LEVEL FROM THE TWO DISPUTING GOVERNMENTS: SOMALIA WOULD AGREE TO WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS AND HEAVY ARMOR FROM THE OGADEN, AND ETHIOPIA WOULD GUARANTEE IT WOULD NOT ATTACK SOMALIA. THEN, BUT ONLY THEN, WOULD THE OAU GOOD OFFICES COMMITTEE BE ABLE TO GET THE TWO SIDES TO SIT DOWN TO NEGOTIATE. BADEMA IMPLIED THAT HIS INTENDED PRESENTATION TO THE FMG WAS ON INSTRUCTION FROM ADDIS ABABA.

4. I ASKED BADEMA WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS THE SOVIET INTEREST IN SWITCHING SIDES. HE SAID HE PRESUMED THE USSR WANTED TO LINE UP WITH THE PREVAILING OAU SENTIMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE PRINCIPLE OF PRESERVATION OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. SECONDLY, THE SOVIETS DOUBTLESS REALIZED THAT ETHIOPIA WAS A MUCH LARGER AND IMPORTANT COUNTRY THAN SOMALIA. THIRDLY, THE SOVIETS, NO LONGER FAVORING THE SEPARATIST MOVEMENT IN ERITREA, MIGHT ENVISAGE SOME KIND OF GEO-POLITICAL INFLUENCE IN TN THE RED SEA AREA THAT WAS MORE DIFFICULT TO EXERCISE FROM BASES IN SOMALIA. FINALLY, HE THOUGHT THEY MIGHT HAVE A GUILTY CONSCIENCE CONCERNING ADVICE THAT "THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES" GAVE ETHIPIA TO SWING THEIR HEAVY ARMOR FROM THE CONFIDENTIAL

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BORDER AREA WITH SOMALIA NEAR HARAR TO POSITIONS NORTH OF GONDAR AND WEST OF ASMARA. BADEMA AVOIDED DIRECT RESPONSE WHEN ASKED WHETHER HE MEANT THAT THE SOVIETS HAD USED THEIR PRIVILEGED POSITION AS MILITARY ADVISORS OF SOMALIA PURPOSEFULLY TO MISLEAD ETHIOPIA AND FACILITATE THE SOMALI ATTACK. HE MERELY SAID THAT ETHIOPIAN CAREER DIPLOMATS WERE NOT PRIVY TO THE INNER COUNCILS OF THE REGIME IN ADDIS; "THERE ARE MANY THINGS WE DO NOT KNOW."

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5. BADEMA SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WAS ALARMED BY RECENT STATEMENTS BY THE SHAH TO THE EFFECT THAT IRAN WOULD NOT STAND IDLY BY IN THE EVENT OF ATTACK ON SOMALIA FROM ETHIOPIA. ACCORDING TO BADEMA, HIS GOVERNMENT IS WORRIED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S TALKS WITH THE SHAH MAY HAVE INCLUDED DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE TRANSFER TO SOMALIA OF IRANIAN WEAPONS ORIGINALLY PROVIDED BY THE U.S. I REPLIED WE CONTINUED TO BELIEVE THAT ADDITIONAL WEAPONRY IN THE HORN WOULD ONLY LEAD TO CONTINUED FIGHTING RATHER THAN TO THE NEGOTIATED SOLUTION WE HOPED AFRICAN COUNTRIES COULD BRING ABOUT.

6. COMMENT: BADEMA IS AN ATTRACTIVE AND SOFT-SPOKEN CAREER DIPLOMAT WITH TWENTY YEARS OF SERVICE PRIMARILY ON THE OAU AND AFRICAN AFFAIRS SIDE OF THE ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN OFFICE. I WOULD ESTIMATE HIS AGE AT 45. HE HAD THREE YEARS OF UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION AT LEADS UNIVERSITY. DURING HIS FIRST DIPLOMATIC ASSIGNMENT, TO MEXICO CITY, HE ATTENDED THE UNIVERSITY

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OF MEXICO AT NIGHT AND OBTAINED A MASTER'S DEGREE. THIS WAS HIS ONLY NON-AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC ASSIGNMENT. BADEMA SAID HE HAD SERVED UNDER FIVE RECENT FOREIGN MINISTERS. WITH NONE OF THEM WOULD HE DISAVOW HIS FRIENDSHIP NO MATTER THE POSITIONS THEY TOOK OR WOULD HAVE TAKEN VIS-A-VIS THE REVOLUTION. AS FOR THE ROLE OF VIOLENCE ON THE CURRENT DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE, BADEMA READILY AGREED IT WAS DISTRESSING BUT LAMELY SAID IT WAS NOT THE POLICY OF THE REGIME. HE SAID SOMALIA AND 'SOME ARAB COUNTRIES' WERE BEHIND SOME OF THE KILLINGS, WEAPONS HAVING BEEN FOUND WITH INCRIMINATING MARKINGS. HE DID NOT REPLY TO MY REMARK THAT TOP MEMBERS OF THE REGIME REPORTEDLY CARRY GUNS TO ALL MEETINGS AND THAT MENGISTU IS ALLEGED TO HAVE PERSONALLY DISPATCHED BENTE.

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